CHAPTER XXXVI

THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM AS A WHOLE l

The Berlin Decree —Retort to Trafalgar —High Protection in France — A Weapon of Bonaparte — Fichte's Commercial State — Protectionist Doctrine in Germany and France — The Orders hi Council — Responsibility for the Napoleonic Wars — British Opinion — The System and the Invasion of England — The System on the Continent — Napoleon's Explanation — Origin of the Idea —Paper Blockade and the System —The Orders hi Council of 1807—Their Justification — State of British Trade — New Concepts in Public Law — The Licensing System — Its Use by Napoleon — Effects hi France*

THIS was the Berlin Decree, which Napoleon issued on November twenty-first. It was the capstone to that structure of continental embargo which for four years had occupied the attention of its author. England was the soul of every continental coalition; France could answer only by continued continental conquest. As England could be reached only through her trade, with continental Europe in his hands, Napoleon determined that he would strike his implacable enemy where she was vulnerable. "The British Islands," ran the decree, "are henceforth blockaded; all commerce with them is prohibited; letters and packages with an English address will be confiscated, as also every store of Eng-

1 References. LiidersrDasContmental System, etc.; Kiesselbach: Die Continentalsperre; Rocke: Die Kontinentalsperre; Rose: Napoleonic Studies; Lumbroso: Napoleone e 1'Inghilterra. This volume the subject and contains an excellent bibliography. The most of this chapter was published in the Pol. Sci. Quarterly, Vol. XIII, in connection with the appearance of Lumbroso's book. is the most complete treatment of